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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Greening the Gateway Cities Fall Planting Season in Chicopee

Free Tree Planting Program Directly Benefits Residents and Business
Owners

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

9/19/2019

Department of Conservation & Recreation

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CHICOPEE — This fall, the Baker-Polito Administration is encouraging residents and business owners within the City of Chicopee to participate in the Greening the Gateway Cities Program (GGCP), which provides trees free of charge. Trees are currently being planted in the area through November 15, 2019 by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) work crews in an effort to reduce energy use in urban neighborhoods by lowering heating and cooling costs.

“The Baker-Polito Administration remains committed to improving green infrastructure, such as urban tree canopies, in an effort to prepare for climate change and other impacts to local neighborhoods throughout the Commonwealth,” **said DCR Commissioner Leo Roy.** “Importantly, the Greening the Gateway Cities Program provides tremendous benefits to local communities, including the improvement of air quality, the reduction of energy consumption, the expansion of vital habitat, and the beautifying of neighborhoods.”

Since 2014, more than 23,000 trees have been planted by the GGCP in several Gateway Cities across Massachusetts. The program specifically targets areas with less tree canopy, older housing stock, higher wind speeds, and larger renter populations. In addition, plantings are concentrated in Environmental Justice neighborhoods to benefit those most in need. Trees near homes and buildings shade structures and lower surface temperatures, while trees up to 1,500 feet away from a home also provide important benefits to the community (cleaner air, increase in property values, reduction in noise pollution, and

improved public health). Additionally, in the winter months, tree trunks and branches help to randomize wind patterns and decrease heat loss by air infiltration in poorly insulated homes. Furthermore, GGCP tree plantings benefit the local economy through the purchasing of trees at local nurseries and employing local planting crews.

To be eligible, residents and property owners must agree to a two-year watering commitment to ensure the trees' survival. Easy care instructions are provided by DCR to tree recipients addressing watering, mulching and pruning. When a potential tree recipient registers, a DCR urban forester will visit their home to determine the best location and species of tree for energy efficiency. They also conduct year-round site visits and are available to answer questions. To find out if a home or business is within the planting zone, and to order a free tree, property owners and residents should call 617-626-1473 or visit [MAUrbanCanopy.org](https://www.maurbancanopy.org/) (<https://www.maurbancanopy.org/>). For more information, please visit the program's [webpage](/service-details/greening-the-gateway-cities-program) (</service-details/greening-the-gateway-cities-program>).

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

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